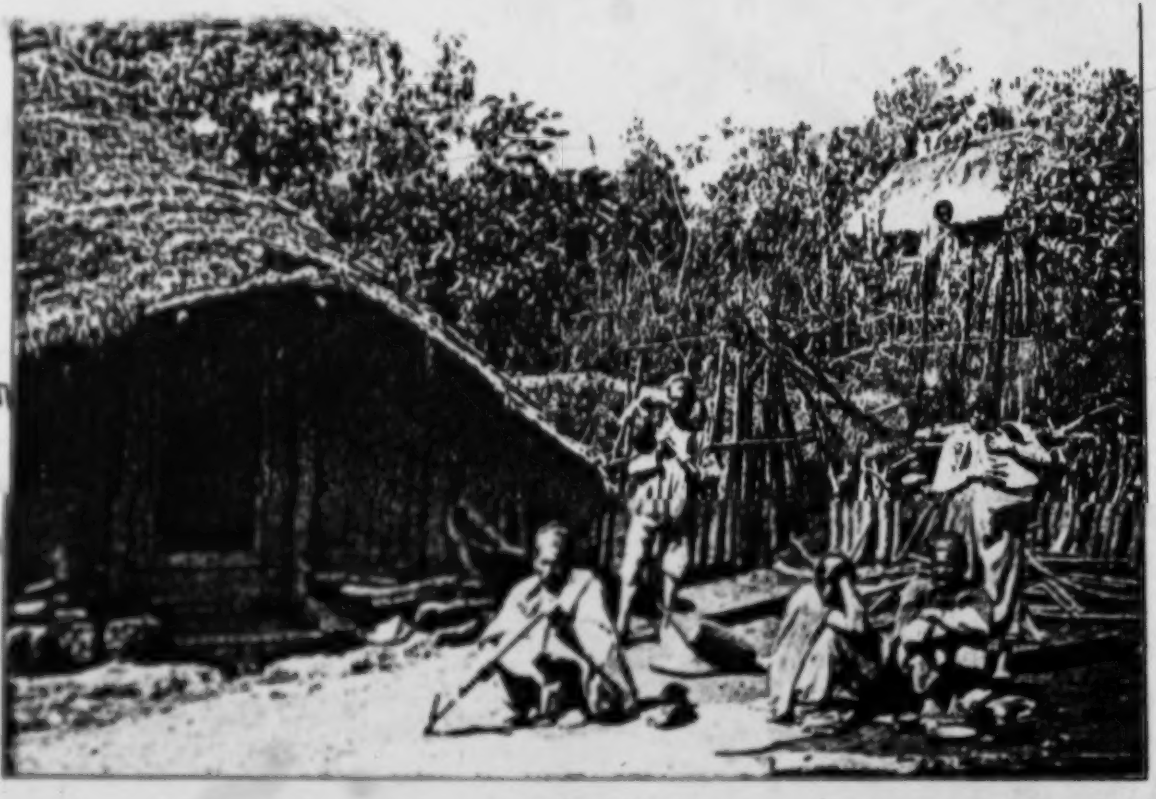
577 plains, jealous of their power, brave in action, and have an aversion to falsehood."

797 177 515 342 Khasis of the interior who have adopted Christianity are generally cleaner in their persons than the non-Christians, and their women dress better than the latter and have an air of self-respect about them. The houses in a Christian village are also far superior, especially where there are resident European missionaries. Khasis who have become Christians often 771 797 794 take to religion with much earnestness (witness the recent religious revival in these hills, which is estimated by the Welsh missionaries to have added between 4,000 and 5,000 converts to Christianity), and are model Sabbatarians, it being a pleasing sight to see men, women, and children trooping to church on a Sunday dressed in their best, and with quite the Sunday expression on their faces one sees in England. It is a pleasure to hear the sound of the distant church bell on the hill-side on a Sunday evening, soon to be succeeded by the beautiful Welsh hymn tunes which, when wafted across the valleys, carry one's thoughts far away. The Welsh missionaries have done, and continue to do, an immense amount of good amongst these people. It would be an evil day for the Khasis if anything should occur to arrest the progress of the mission work in the Khasi Hills.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

162 101 The Khasis inhabit the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, although there are a few Khasi settlers in the neighbouring plains districts. The Census Report of 1901 gives the following figures of Khasi residents in the plains:—

Cachar	333
Sylhet	3,083
Goalpara	4
Kamrup	191
Darrang	10
Nowgong	29
Sibsagar	62
Lakhimpur	22
Lushai Hills	74
North Cachar	32
Naga Hills	62



A KHASI HOUSE,
with Egg-breaker in the foreground.
(from a photograph by Mrs. Muriel.)

[Facing p. 90]

231 Shillong is excellent, the flavour being quite as good as that
263 of English honey. Under "Miscellaneous Customs connected
with Death" will be found a reference to the statement that the
[764] dead bodies of Siems used to be embalmed in honey. The
existence of the custom is generally denied by Khasis, but
its former prevalence is probable, as several trustworthy
authors have quoted it.

HOUSES.

342 The houses of the people are cleaner than might be supposed
515 after taking into consideration the dirtiness of the clothes and
persons of those who inhabit them. They are as a rule substantial
thatched cottages with plank or stone walls, and raised
on a plinth some 2 to 3 ft. from the ground. The only
354 window is a small opening on one side of the house, which
admits but a dim light into the smoke-begrimed interior. The
beams are so low that it is impossible for a person of ordinary
stature to stand erect within. The fire is always burning on an
earthen or stone hearth in the centre. There is no chimney,
the smoke finding its exit as best it can. The firewood is
placed to dry on a swinging frame above the hearth. In the
343 porch are stacked fuel and odds and ends. The pigs and calves
342 are generally kept in little houses just outside the main
building. The Khasi house is oval-shaped, and is divided
into three rooms, a porch, a centre room, and a retiring-room.

354 In olden days the Khasis considered nails *sang*, or taboo, and
784 only used a certain kind of timber for the fender which surrounds
the hearth; but they are not so particular now-a-days.
In Mawkhar, Cherrapunji, and other large villages, the walls of
342 houses are generally of stone. In Cherrapunji the houses are
frequently large, but the largest house I have seen in the hills
is that of the Doloi of Suhtnga in the Jaintia Hills, which
measures 74 ft. in length. The house of the Siem Priestess at
Smit in the Khasi Hills is another large one, being 61 ft. long
by 30 ft. broad. In front of the Khasi house is a little space
fenced in on two sides, but open towards the village street. The

342 Syntengs plaster the space in front of the house with red earth and cow-dung, this custom being probably a remnant of Hindu influences. The Khasis have some peculiar customs when they build a new house. When the house is completed they perform a ceremony, *kynjoh-kha-skain*, when they tie three pieces of dried fish to the ridge pole of the house and then jump up and try to pull them down again. Or they kill a pig, cut a piece of the flesh with the skin attached, and fix it to the ridge pole, and then endeavour to dislodge it. The Syntengs at Nartiang worship *U Biskurom* (Biswakarma) and *Ka Siem Synshar* when a house is completed, two fowls being sacrificed, one to the former, the other to the latter. The feathers of the fowls are affixed to the centre post of the house, which must be of *u dieng sning*, a variety of the Khasi oak. The worship of a Hindu god (Biswakarma), the
776 architect of the Hindu gods, alongside the Khasi deity *Ka Siem*
177 *Synshar*, is interesting, and may be explained by the fact that
342 Nartiang was at one time the summer capital of the kings of Jaintia, who were Hindus latterly and disseminated Hindu customs largely amongst the Syntengs. Mr. Rita says that
627 amongst the Syntengs, a house, the walls of which have been
342 plastered with mud, is a sign that the householder has an enemy. The plastering no doubt is executed as a preventive of fire, arson in these hills being a common form of revenge.

342 Amongst the Khasis, when a daughter leaves her mother's house and builds a house in the mother's compound, it is considered *sang*, or taboo, for the daughter's house to be built on the right-hand side of the mother's house, it should be built either on the left hand or at the back of the mother's house.

776 In Nongstoin it is customary to worship a deity called
793 *u'lei lap* (Khasi, *u phan*), by nailing up branches of the Khasi oak, interspersed with jaw-bones of cattle and the feathers of fowls, to the principal post, which must be of *u dieng sning*. The Siem priestess of the Nongkrem State at Smit and the ladies of the Siem family perform a ceremonial dance before a large post of oak in the midst of the Siem priestess' house on the occasion of the annual goat-killing ceremony. This oak post is furnished according to custom by the *lyngskor*

776 793 or official spokesman of the Siem's Durbar. Another post of oak in this house is furnished by the people of the State.

342 177 353 The houses of the well-to-do Khasis of the present day in Mawkhar and Cherrapunji are built after the modern style with iron roofs, chimneys, glass windows and doors. In Jowai the well-to-do traders have excellent houses of the European pattern, which are as comfortable as many of the European subordinates' quarters in Shillong. Some up-to-date families in Shillong and at Cherra allow themselves muslin curtains and European furniture.

342 [824] The houses of the Pnar-Wárs are peculiar. The roof, which is thatched with the leaves of a palm called u *tynriew*, is hog-backed and the eaves come down almost to the ground. There are three rooms in the Wár as in the Khasi house, although called by different names in the Wár dialect. The hearth is in the centre room. [361] The houses are built flush with the ground and are made of bamboo. In the Wár villages of Nongjri and 376 Umniuh there are small houses erected in the compounds of 762 the ordinary dwelling-houses called *ïing bauid* (spirit houses). In these houses offerings to the spirits of departed family ancestors are placed at intervals, this practice being very similar to the more ancient form of Shintoism. In some Wár villages 342 there are also separate bachelors' quarters. This custom is in accordance with that of the Naga tribes. There is no such custom amongst the Khasi Uplanders. The Wár houses are similar to those of the Pnar Wárs, except that a portion of the house is generally built on a platform, the main house resting on the hill-side and the portion on the platform projecting therefrom, the object being to obtain more space, the area for houses in the village sites being often limited owing to the steepness of the hill-sides.

The Bhoi and Lyngngam houses are practically similar, and may be described together. They are generally built on fairly high platforms of bamboo, are frequently 30 to 40 ft. in length, and are divided into various compartments in order [354] to suit the needs of the family. The hearth, which is of earth, is in the centre room. There is a platform at the back of the Lyngngam house, and in front of the Bhoi house, used for drying paddy, spreading chillies, &c., and for sitting on when the day's work is done. In order to ascend to a Bhoi house, you have 342 to climb up a notched pole. The Bhois sacrifice a he-goat and [376] a fowl to *Rik-iaplong* (Khasi, *Ramiew iing*), the household [382] god, when they build a new house.

VILLAGES.

Unlike the Nagas and Kukis, the Khasis do not build their 361 villages on the extreme summits of hills, but a little below the [393] tops, generally in small depressions, in order to obtain some 342 protection from the strong winds and storms which prevail in these hills at certain times of the year. According to the late U Jeebon Roy, it is *sang*, or taboo, to the Khasis to build a house on the last eminence of a range of hills, this custom having perhaps arisen owing to the necessity of locating villages with reference to their defence against an enemy. Khasis build their houses fairly close together, but not so close as houses in the Bhoi and Lyngngam villages. Khasis seldom change the sites of their villages, to which they are very much attached, where, as a rule, the family tombs are standing and [311] the *mawbynna* or memorial stones. In many villages stone cromlechs and memorial stones are to be seen which from their appearance show that the villages have been there for many [669] generations. During the Jaintia rebellion the village of Jowai was almost entirely destroyed, but as soon as the rebellion was over the people returned to the old site and rebuilt their [731] village. Similarly, after the earthquake, the ancient village sites were not abandoned in many cases, but the people rebuilt their houses in their former positions, although in Shillong and Cherrapunji they rebuilt the walls of the houses of wooden materials instead of stone. There is no such thing as 361 a specially reserved area in the village for the Siem and 565 the nobility, all the people, rich or poor, living together in one village, their houses being scattered about indiscriminately. To the democratic Khasi the idea of the Siem living apart from his people would be repugnant. In the 137 vicinity of the Khasi village, often just below the brow of 778 the hill to the leeward side, are to be seen dark woods of oak

248 custom of their own from cultivating the *landoo*, in which
231 case they plant certain other trees favourable to the growth of
764 the lac insect. The villages are situated near their patches of
cultivation in the forest. The villages are constantly shifting,
361 owing to the necessity of burning fresh tracts of forest every
241 two years. The houses are entirely built of bamboo, and, for
such temporary structures, are very well built. In front, the
342 houses are raised some 3 or 4 ft. from the ground on platforms, being generally built on the side of a fairly steep
hill, one end of the house resting on the ground, and the other
on bamboo posts. The back end of the house is sometimes some 8 or 9 ft. from the ground. At the end of the
house farthest away from the village path is a platform used
for sitting out in the evening, and for spreading chillies and
342 other articles to dry. Some Lynngam houses have only one
354 room in which men, women, and children are all huddled
231 together, the hearth being in the centre, and, underneath the
platform, the pigs. Well-to-do people, however, possess a
retiring room, where husband and wife sleep. A house I
342 measured at Nongsdilar village was of the following
dimensions :—Length, 42 ft.; breadth, 16 ft.; height of house
from the ground to the eaves, front, 9 ft.; back 18 ft. Houses
are built with a portion of the thatch hanging over the eaves in
front. No explanation could be given me for this. It is probably a Garo custom. In some Lynngam villages there are
houses in the centre of the village where the young unmarried
men sleep, where male guests are accommodated, and where the
[571] village festivities go on. These are similar to the *dekachang* or
bachelors' club-houses of the Mikirs, Garos, and Lalungs, and to
the *morung* of the Nagas. This is a custom of the Thibeto-Burman tribes in Assam, and is not a Khasi institution. There
[571] are also high platforms, some 12 ft. or 15 ft. in height, in
Lynngam villages, where the elders sit of an evening in the hot
[355] weather and take the air. Lynngam houses and villages are
usually much cleaner than the ordinary Khasi villages, and
although the Lynngams keep pigs, they do not seem to be so
352 much *en évidence* as in the Khasi village. There is little
513 or no furniture in a Lynngam house. The Lynngam sleeps on
287 a mat on the floor, and in cold weather covers himself with a

a(of the Lynngams --- [illegible])

784 for a cremation). See table 1, picture 2, "The heathen Khasi village Raliang with a "holy wood" (law kyntang) in the background."

6. Giving or taking anything at all with the left hand.
7. Stepping over the corpse of another person.
8. Killing an animal or bird without having previously strewn rice on its head.
9. Using the milk of the cow or the goat.
10. Completing all kinds of started sewing or basket weaving for pregnant women.
11. Pregnant women are not allowed to accompany any funeral procession.
12. The husband of a pregnant woman is forbidden to roof the house (straw roof) or to make a handle for a hatchet or an axe (ka wait - ka da).
13. Speaking with anyone at all as long as the threshing of the rice lasts, unless it is with the co-workers of the man or of the woman.
14. Variously the use of pork, dried fish, melons, lemons, etc. is forbidden.

7?4 68? 342 Violating the sang is punished by the deity. Thus several Khasi explained after the great earthquake of June 12, 1897: "Because you [illegible] planks with nails, it has so happened that everything has tumbled down, because god does not wish stone and despises nails. Formerly we too built only with wood and bamboo and used bast for making things fast and for binding, but today people have become proud and have built with stone. That is why this has happened; and

776
488 hates stone; he does not wish any lime." (11.)
784

11. P.A. Münzloher, S.D.S. Die apostolische Präfektur Assam [The Apostolic Praefecture of Assam] (Rome, 1899), p. 83.

1. Egg Throwing (shat-pylleng)

787 The most common of all the oracles of the
782 Khasi is egg throwing (shat-pylleng). A great deal has already been written about it. (12)

[illegible] 12. P. Dr. C. Becker, Das Eierwerfen der Khasi [Egg Throwing Among the Khasi] Anthropos XII-XIII (1917-1918), pp. 131-136.

I will only add here the prayer of the sacrificer u nongshat-pylleng. It is not an actual prayer, at least the nongshat-pylleng is not bound to any formula. The sacrificer speaks approximately thus:

Ko langpoh khun ka blei, ko bamong ko batip ko ba lah ko baiai, nga pynthiah nga pyndem halor ka diengshat ka dienglbhalo, ka duwan ka dupat, u kynrad ngan kylli ngan	O thou egg of the oracle, thou daughter of the goddess, thou whom thou knowest and art aware of (art able to) thou remainest thou (interest): I put thee down here on the board (16)

16. Cf. Table II, Picture 1. [113]

tapkit katno ka long shiton ka lanot ka shuh ka thor ka shit ka iyang ka pliu ka lyngo la ka met u	on the oracular wood, on the altar, o mistress, I question and ponder (would like to question,

Table I

Third Burial Place

[illegible]

[illegible] The Village Sohiong

/[illegible]-[illegible]/

[illegible]
[illegible]

Fig. 6. A Holy Grove and Part of the Village [illegible].

8: Gurdon G-3 (no date) 1904 AR7 Khasi AR7

291 small kilt), and a cap which is peaked in front and which comes down well over the ears, called (ka tupia shkor) ear cap. The dress of the Khasi females is somewhat different from that of the Synteng, the former wears a striped cloth tied round the waist, hanging down to the knees, and another cloth, with a fringed border, knotted on both the shoulders to cover the bust and a narrow cloth, called ka *jympien*, to serve the purpose of under-clothing. A cloth knotted in front is also worn like a cloak over shoulders. The Synteng woman wears a cloth encircled round the body fastened above the bust and drooping down to the ankles. Another cloth is thrown over the shoulders, and crossed in front. Both Khasi and Synteng women wear a cloth tied over the head, called *ka tap mohkhlieh*. Up-to-date Khasi males wear knicker-
292 bockers, stockings, and boots, and females chemises. On festive occasions, both Khasis and Syntengs, males and females, wear expensive silks, with earrings of gold or silver. There is a special dancing-dress of
301 elaborate pattern. The women at festivals wear a circlet of silver with a spire-head ornament behind, rising 6 or 3 inches from the back of the head. Large coral beads are much valued, and necklaces of alternate beads of coral and gold, and sometimes of coral alone, are worn by the chiefs and their principal followers. Such necklaces are worn by
262 women also on *gala* occasions. The staple diet of both Khasis and Syntengs is rice and dried fish. They are, however, fond of all kinds of meat, especially pork. Some of the Syntengs abstain from beef,
[172] owing no doubt to Hindu influences. Neither Khasis nor Syntengs eat dog, which is partaken of with zest by the Nagas and the Garo tribes,—this is owing to the dog being considered by the Khasis to be the friend of man. Neither Khasis nor Syntengs use milk, the latter being thought by them to be an excrement. Neither Khasis nor Syntengs
461 tattoo. The weapons of both Khasis and Syntengs are bows and arrows, swords and shields. The national game of the Khasis is archery, regarding which a detailed description will be found in paragraph 33.

The people live in regular villages on fixed sites which have not
361 [illegible]
sites, where, as a rule, the family tombs are standing. The houses are
302 built in the shape of a shell, the houses being divided into three compartments,—the *Shyngkup*, or porch, where cattle and ducks, and sometimes fowls, are kept; *nengpei*, or centre room, which is used for cooking and sitting in; and *rumpei*, or inner room, where the people sleep. The houses are low, with grass roofs reaching nearly to the ground, the beams are of hewn timber, the walls are of either planks roughly hewn or of reeds or split bamboos plastered with clay. The Khasis' houses generally have boarded floors raised some feet from the ground level,

8: Gurdon G-3 (no date) 1904 AR? Khasi AR?

—the *Shynghup*, or porch, being flush with the ground. The *rangpeh*, or 342
centre room, is approached by a flight of steps. There are no windows,
except one, which is bored on one side to admit light and air,—this is
called the *pongshai*. Both Khasis and Syntengs, like other Indo-Chinese 524
races, are much addicted to gambling, and drinking to excess in a 273
national wine. Christianity has, through the agency of the Welsh Cal- 191
vinistic Mission, gained a very striking extension, and may be said in- 177
deed to be leavening the whole nation. Schools are numerous, and are
pretty well attended by girls as well as boys. The Christians, and
those who have come under the influence of Christianity, have adopted
a high standard of comfort, and their houses resemble English cottages
more nearly than the huts with which one is familiar in India.

Agriculture.—The Khasis do not use the plough; they cultivate their 241
fields with a peculiar-shaped hoe, or *mokhiw*. They cultivate rice in
the valleys, the rice being sown broadcast and the fields irrigated often
after considerable labour. They also cultivate hill rice on the uplands,
which they sow broadcast. The potato, which was introduced into the [199]
Khasi Hills by Mr. David Scott about the [429]
year 1830,[1] is extensively cultivated and forms
one of the principal articles of export. *Job's-*
tears (*Coix lachryma*), several kinds of millet, Indian-corn, the *Soh-*
phlang (*Flemingia vestita*), are also largely cultivated. The valleys on the 245
southern slopes of the hills have extensive orange groves, the oranges,
especially those grown in the neighbourhood of Shella, being famous for
their quality. The betel, vine, and areca nut are also largely grown on
the southern side of the hills and in the low valleys, these plantations
being irrigated by elaborate systems of aqueducts. The leaf of the bay-
tree (*Tejpyead*) is collected, and is exported to the Sylhet plains. The [437]
Syntengs differ from the *Khasis*, in that they make use of the plough.
Both *Khasis* and *Syntengs* are industrious cultivators, and they possess
a certain rough and ready knowledge of the uses of manure. A more
detailed description of agriculture in these hills will be given in the
monograph.

3. *Matriarchal customs and law of inheritance of property.*—The 611
mother is the head of the house, and is both owner and the custodian of 428
the family property so long as she lives. Males can own no property
amongst either Khasis or Syntengs except self-acquired property. On
the death of the mother, in the case of the Khasis, the family property
passes to the youngest daughter. According to some authorities, how-
ever, the property would in practice be divided amongst all the surviv-
ing daughters. Failing daughters, the property passes to the youngest
niece, and failing a niece, to the youngest female cousin. The same

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[1] Khasi and Jaintia Hills Administration Report for [illegible] by Colonel Rowe.

[p.177]

THE KHASI HUTS OF MAWPHLANG

BY

Ram Krishna Mukherjee, Ram Chandra Bose, Salil Ray Chaudhuri, Sabita Gupta and Kumarika Sengupta

174 Post-Graduate students of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Calcutta are expected to do a certain amount of field work for practical training. In 1960 a Khasi village was studied by us, the students of the Post-Graduate class, as part of our training, under the guidance of Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay, the Head of the Department of Anthropology, whom we have 121 to thank also for the photographs used for this paper. This note on Khasi house structure is based on our work in the village of 392. Mawphlang, the headquarters of the Khasi State of this name, in the Khasi Hills, Assam. Our studies included a survey of the village and its house types. Particular attention was paid to the structure of the old type of Khasi house.

393. Gurdon in his book on the Khasis of Assam describes the Khasi hut as elliptical in shape. But in Mawphlang we found that they can be more strictly said to be "U"-shaped, in ground plan the bend of the "U" being the front, the two parallel arms the sides, and a straight line connecting the two ends of the two arms of the "U" the rear. We found this to be the type of most of the old houses of Mawphlang village. As is well known it is the custom among Khasis for the women of a family to live together, until the number of members increases so much that they cannot be provided with room in a single house. Then new houses are built. It is usual for a married couple with children to put up a separate

hut for themselves. In all these cases the youngest daughter
● 342. of the family who is known as the Ka Khadduh of the family must live in the old house and maintain the social and religious traditions of the family. In the village of Mawphlang we found that the houses of all the Ka Khadduhs like Ka Sadie, Ka Hosibon and others, and also the old house of the wife of U. Suhuni, the myntri of the Mawphlang State, all belong to this "U"-shaped type. This association of Ka Khadduhs and "U" shaped huts suggests that this is the old type. The modern huts vary in their structure some being like modern bungalows common now-a-days in Shillong.

The old Khasi house, in general, can be described as follows:—

[343] [35] Generally there is a compound in front and a pigsty at one side, the whole site being enclosed by a fencing of reed and small plants or of wooden planks or some such material. The hut as observed from outside is elliptical in front and box-shaped behind (as seen in the diagram). It is "U"-shaped in the ground plan. The roof of the hut is sloped on the two sides and spread out like a fan, in a semi-circle, in front.

353 342. The material used in the construction of the hut varies. In some of the old houses the walls were found to be made of blocks of stone with mud in the interstices serving the purpose of mortar. The roof had a bamboo frame covered with thatching grass. In other old huts the walls were not entirely made of stone blocks. In some we found the front portion made entirely of stone, the lower portions of the side and of the rear walls, up to a level of two to three feet, made of stone, the remaining portions being made of wooden planks or reeds covered with mud. In some modified huts again (either they were built later or the old huts were repaired) the entire rear wall except at the base and the upper portions of the sides were made of tinplates from used cans nailed to a frame. In some huts corrugated and galvanised iron sheets have been used. The material for the roof

also varies a good deal now-a-days, some being of corrugated 333
galvanised iron sheets and others of flat tinplate sheets instead of 342

342

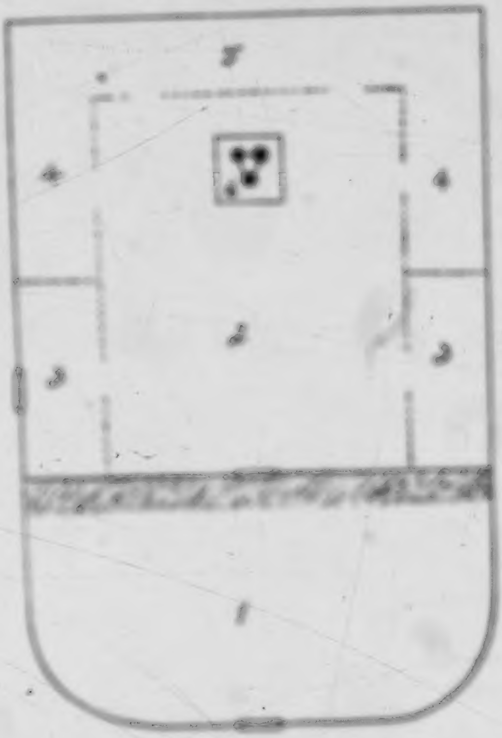

Figure [illegible]
1.Ka [illegible]; 2. Ka [illegible];
3.Ka [illegible]; 4. Ka Jing [illegible];
5.Ka [illegible]; 6. Ka [illegible].

thatching grass. In some modified houses we found a porch added in front of the main door of the hut.

Entering the hut by the main door, the interior can be divided into two compartments, the front one which is on the ground level and the inner compartment which has a wooden floor raised to a height of about four feet supported on pillars of stone.

[illegible] Mukherjee et al. [illegible] [illegible]

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342

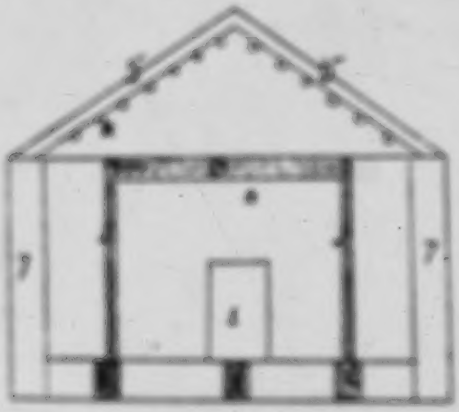
KHASI HUTS OF MAWPHLANG

Construction of the frame of the Ka [illegible]

Thatching the Ka [illegible]

[facing p. 180]

342 In some huts there is a wooden partition in between the two compartments, while in others it is absent. The front compart-



ELEVATION

1. Door; 2. Supporting pillar; 3. [illegible] 4. [illegible]; [illegible]; 6. Supporting pillar of wooden floor; 7. Side walls.

ment on the ground floor is known in Mawphlang as Ka Kyndur, while the raised portion is known as Ka Nympei. The Ka Kyndur is smaller than the Ka Nympei and is roughly semi-circular in shape as it is formed of the front portion of the hut. Its floor is paved with stone or made of beaten earth. In some huts where there is a partition between the Ka Kyndur and the Ka Nympei, there is a raised shelf in the Ka Kyndur which is really the projection of the wooden floor of the Ka Nympei. From the Ka Kyndur the Ka Nympei is reached by means of a few steps made of stone or a short staircase of wood. Where there is a partition between the Ka Kyndur and the Ka Nympei there is a door in the middle of the wooden partition to enter the Ka Nympei.

The Ka Nympei is rectangular in shape and comprises about two-thirds of the area of the hut. The Ka Nympei is not a single compartment but is divided into smaller compartments at its two sides and the rear by means of low wooden partitions.

342 But in some huts there are no such partitions and the demarcation is made by the pillars and beams which support the roof of the hut. The small enclosures at the two sides in the front portion are known locally as Ka Kynroin. The Ka Kynroin at the right hand side of the Ka Nympei close to the Ka Kyndur generally is used for storing water. The Ka Kynroin at the left hand side of the Ka Nympei just opposite to that for storing water is used as a larder for potatoes and other provisions. The enclosures at the rear of the Ka Nympei and those remaining at its sides are used as sleeping places. The sleeping places at the sides are known as Ka Iing Kyndong and those at the rear
343 as Ka Rumpei. In most huts there is a window in the Ka
354 Rumpei, high up in the back wall of the hut. In some huts there is a window in the front wall, in the Ka Kyndur. In many huts there is no window at all. Besides the main door in the Ka Kyndur, there is another door to the Ka Kynroin at the right hand side of the Ka Nympei. We were informed that in Cherra the part called Ka Kyndur is termed Ka Shyngkup, and Ka Kynroin as Ka Pyngshai.

In the centre of the Ka Nympei there is the hearth known as Ka Dypei. It is a rectangular space, about four feet and a half in length and three feet and a half in breadth, enclosed by borders of wood. The floor of the hearth is paved with stones and sand. In the centre of it there are three small-shaped stone
352 pieces which are known as Mawkyrsiew. On the Mawkyrsiew there is an iron triangle known as Ka Nar to hold the pots. The space of the Ka Nympei behind the hearth and in front of the Ka Rumpei is known as *Jingtuhkhiewja*.

Running round the edge of the Ka Nympei at a man's height there is a wooden frame supported on vertical posts; to this frame are fixed the partitions, separating the Ka Nympei from the Ka Kyndur, Ka Kynroin, Ka Iing Kyndong and Ka Rumpei. This wooden frame is known as Rabtyngshan or Rabtyngshu. Just above the Rabtyngshan several short beams of wood cross the house from side to side and rest on the

352 Bahtympshan. They are known as Ukhong. The Ukhong above the Dypei are placed close to one another. A little apart from this row of Ukhongs, there is a single Ukhong parallel to the others which in some huts is hollowed out and is used as a receptacle for some household articles.

342 The frame of the roof as observed from inside consists of a central ridge pole running along the length of the hut and situated above the middle of it. From the ridge pole pairs of rafters diverge on two sides, their lower ends resting on the side walls of the hut. In front of the hut, the rafters are radially spread out from the anterior end of the ridge pole which is supported by a vertical pole known as Bijit. These rafters rest on semi-circular wall at the bend of the "U". The ridge pole and the rafters are known as Kynshi. Besides the rafters there are thinner wooden poles similarly arranged which further strengthen the frame of the roof. They are known as Uknoh. The small rafters which are set cross-wise on the sloping Kynshi and form each series a "U" round the ceiling are known as U Pynier. This frame for the roof is made on those huts where thatching grass is used, that is,-in the old type of huts. In modern huts where corrugated or flat sheets of iron have been used instead of thatching grass such a frame is not required.

In the village of Mawphlang, we saw an old type hut, of Ka Lita repaired and re-built. At first the raised rectangular portion of the hut, the Ka Nympei, was reconstructed on a raised platform, with the frame for the roof above it. Then a semi-circular area was taken in front of the Ka Nympei about one-third the area of the inner compartment. Simultaneously with the making of the frame of the Ka Kynshu, the thatch was made in sections in bamboo frames. Then the roof of the hut was covered with these sections which were arranged in overlapping sheets (see plate). An old type Khasi hut is about thirty feet long; it is about twenty feet wide at the back.

343 Reference has been made to the usual pigsty adjoining each house. It is generally a small thatched shed with walls made of

wood and grass matting. The shed may be partitioned into two 343 compartments one for keeping the cows and the other for keeping pigs. The upper portion of the pigsty is used for storing fuel in some houses. There is no uniformity in respect of this shed.

All the "U"-shaped huts found in the Mawphlang village 342 were studied. Besides these typical "U"-shaped huts there are many other huts in the village which are rather flattened in front and can be said to belong to the flattened "U"-type. In the table given below the variations are shown in detail of the typical "U"-type huts and also of a flattened "U"-type hut belonging to Ka Lahirmon of Lyngdoh clan. It is peculiar that all these huts have their main door facing north.

Serial No.	*Owner of the hut.*	*Materials used.*	*Partition.*
I.	Ka Shaibon (Elder House).	*Wall*—In front entirely of stone. Lower portions of sides and rear of stone. Upper portions of sides of wood, reed and mud. Upper portion of rear of thatch. *Roof*—Thatched entirely.	Partition between Ka Kyndue and Ka Nyngpei. No partition between Ka Nyngpei and its enclosure.
II.	Ka Bon Lyngdoh.	*Wall*—Wood with an outer cover of reed and thatch. *Roof*—Thatching grass.	No partition between Ka Kyndue and Ka Nyngpei, and between Ka Nyngpei and its enclosure.
III.	Ka Thang ?	*Wall*—Planks covered with thatch. *Roof*—Thatched.	No partition between Ka Kyndue and Ka Nyngpei but the inner fireplace is present.
IV.	Ka Pre Lyngdoh.	*Wall*—Planks with outer thatchings. Very low stone wall all round at the base. *Roof*—Thatched.	No partition between Ka Kyndue and Ka Nyngpei.
V.	Ka La Sheng.	*Wall*—Low stone wall all round. Upper portions of front of reed and mud. Upper portions of side and rear of planks with outer cover of thatch. *Roof*—Thatched.	Partition between Ka Kyndue and Ka Nyngpei.

343

Serial No.	*Owner of the hut.*	*Materials used.*	*Peculiarities.*
VI.	Ka [illegible] (Khar Dumpep).	*Wall*—Front, sides, and lower portions of rear of stone. Upper portions of rear of flat tinned sheets. *Roof*—Thatched.	Same as above.
VII.	Ka Ko (Lyngdoh).	*Wall*—Front, sides, and lower portion of rear of stone. Upper portion of rear of flat tinned sheets. *Roof*—Thatched.	Partition between Ka Nyndur and Ka Rympei. In front of the main door a porch has been added,—a two-sloped tin shed resting on four wooden pillars.
VIII.	Ka Sadia (Lyngdoh).	*Wall*—Front and lower portions of sides and rear of stone. Upper portion of left wall of flat tinned sheets. Upper portions of right wall and rear of thatch. *Roof*—Thatched.	No partitions.
IX.	Ka [illegible] (Khar [illegible]).	*Wall*—Front and lower portions of sides and rear of stone. Upper portions of sides of wood, bamboo, and mud. Upper portions of rear of thatch. *Roof*—Sloping sides of corrugated sheets. Front thatched.	Partition between Ka Nyndur and Ka Rympei. No partition between Ka Rympei and its enclosures.
X.	Ka [illegible] (Lyngdoh).	*Wall*—Low stone walls all round. *Roof*—Thatched.	
XI.	Ka [illegible] ([illegible]).	*Wall*—Front entirely of stone. Lower portions of sides and rear of stone, upper portions of planks. *Roof*—Flat tin plates.	Partition between Ka Nyndur and Ka Rympei, and between Ka Rympei and its enclosures. One window in Ka Rympei.
XII.	Ka [illegible] (Lyngdoh).	*Wall*—Stone all round. *Roof*—Corrugated iron sheets.	All the partitions present. Two windows at the head of the 'U' by the two sides of the main door. One window at the back of Ka Rympei on the left side of it.
XIII.	Ka Ko (Lyngdoh).	*Wall*—Lower portions of stone. Upper portions of sides of bamboo and mud. Upper portion of rear of tinned sheets. *Roof*—Tinplates.	No partition between Ka Nyndur and Ka Rympei.

B. Mukherjee et al. 2–4, 5 (1940) 1941 [illegible]

342

Serial No.	*Owner of the hut*	*Materials used*	*Peculiarities*
XIV.	Ka Shyrngah (Lyngkhih).	*Wall*—Front, sides, and lower portions of rear stone. Upper portion of rear of flat tinned sheets. *Roof*—Corrugated sheets of iron.	Partition between Ka Nyngkong and Ka Rympei. A porch in front of hut similar to that in Ka Ra's hut.
XV.	Ka Tel Lyngkhih	*Wall*—Front and lower portions of sides of stone. Upper portions of sides of timber and mud. Rear almost entirely of tinned sheets. *Roof*—Entirely of flat tinplate.	
XVI.	Ka Pubon (Khar Dohling).	*Wall*—Front, sides, and lower portions of rear of stone. Upper portions of rear of flat of tin. *Roof*—Corrugated sheets of iron.	No partition between Ka Nyngkong and Ka Rympei. No stage in Ka Nyngkong to match Ka Rympei. A small porch in front of main door as in the hut of Ka Ra.
XVII.	Ka Donbon (Lyngkhih.)	*Wall*—Lower plinth of stone all round, upper portions of corrugated iron sheet. *Roof*—Corrugated sheets of iron.	Small opening in the rear wall.
XVIII.	Ka Wer (Khar Wankhar).	*Wall*—Same as prev. *Roof*—Same as prev.	
XIX.	Ka Syrbon (Lyngkhih).	*Wall*—Low stone wall all round at the base. Upper portions of sides and front of corrugated sheets. Upper portion of rear of tinplate. *Roof*—of tinplate.	Partition between Ka Nyngkong and Ka Rympei. Small porch in front of main door as mentioned in some huts previously.
XX.	Ka Lalinmon (Lyngkhih).	*Wall*—Low stone wall all round. Upper portions of corrugated iron. *Roof*—Corrugated sheets of iron.	No partition between Ka Nyngkong and Ka Rympei.

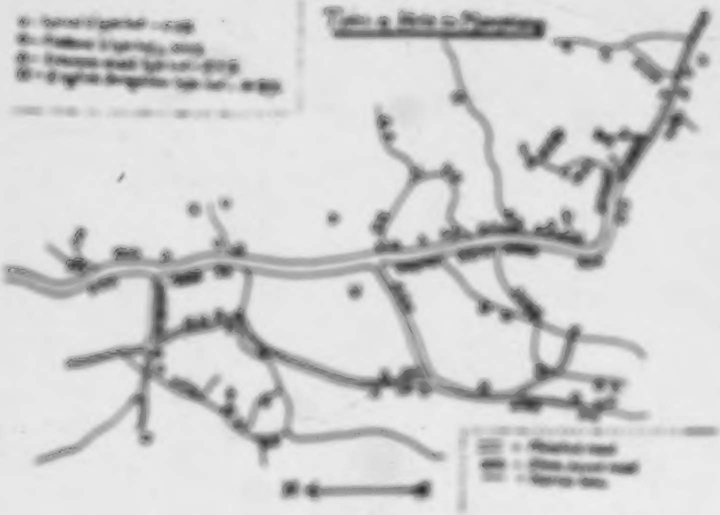
It has already been said that the Khasi house type is now changing. Some such changes have been noted in the table, such as, the addition of a porch, the ground plan of one hut changing into a flattened 'U,' and the extensive use of flat or corrugated iron sheets in place of thatch. As mentioned previously besides these typical 'U'-type huts, in many other huts the bend of the 'U' in front has been flattened but the oval roof in front is present. This is quite common. In other modified

342 huts the ground plan is entirely rectangular. In this type of huts the materials used are also different, the corrugated sheets and wooden planks being more used than blocks of stone and thatching grass. The inner apartments, however, conform to the old plan. In the market place of the village there are some houses which are two-storied, the front of the ground floor of which have been utilised for shops. These houses do not at all conform to the old 'U'-type but are square or rectangular in
342 ground plan. Near the market place there are three houses
177 of well-to-do Khasis which resemble the bungalows of Europeans of Shillong (and of the Mission house at Mawphlang) in their structure and material. In these modern houses unlike the old ones the main door faces the street. The myntri U. Suburai who is one of the well-to-do persons of Mawphlang village has his old house (that is, the old house he put up for his wife after marriage) of the 'U'-type, the description of which has been given in the preceding table under the name of the owner, the wife of U Suburai, Ka Shyngeh. But their new house which has been added to their old one in front of it is altogether of the bungalow type. This new house is entered from a porch in front, leading to the central room which is used as parlour. The myntri generally sits here with his friends, round the fire-place, which is not a Dypei but a hearth in European style. The kitchen is beyond this room. Bed-rooms open from the drawing room to the sides.

342 A plan of the village showing the distribution of the various
361 types of hut in Mawphlang is given below. From the plan it
177 will be found that out of the 160 houses in the village, inhabited at present, the typical 'U'-type of huts form about 11·3 per cent.; the flattened 'U'-type about 35·0 per cent.; the intermediate type, which has totally given up the 'U'-shaped ground plan but has its interior of the old type, about 27·5 per cent. and the English bungalow type about 26·2 per cent. This data shows how rapidly the old type of Khasi hut is now changing.

[illegible]

342
361
177



911

8 Khasi [illegible] near [illegible] village

9 Khasi house at [illegible] village

962

[P. 96-A]

Shella

Confederacy forms a more marked endogamous community, through being cut 621
off geographically and economically from the rest of the Khasi, and socially
from the neighbouring Hindu people.

The Economy and the People

Shella lies along the upper part of the Shella River and stretches upwards 191
along the steep slope, looking down towards the Bengal plain. The climate
of this part of the hills is considered to be one of the worst in tropical India 192
for human habitation. The Bengal plain, though warmer than this area, is
considered more healthy. This border land is the zone of malaria, typhoid, 164
black fever, cholera, etc. None of the Bengalee peasants dare to live in such
an area. However, it is the most fertile for products such as betel-nuts, pan- 437
leaves, oranges, bananas and pineapples, and it also produces limestone. These
people seem to prefer to settle in this zone and to enjoy its prosperity, at the 164
expense of human lives: every year, especially between March and September,
the inhabitants suffer from various fevers and dysentery and other disease, many
of the weaker facing death. 648

Before the Partition of India and Pakistan, the products of Shella were 177
carried down the Shella River to Sylhet, one of the biggest centres in East 178
Bengal, which brought unimaginable wealth to the Shella people. Their houses
were built by carpenters from Sylhet. The style and structure of these houses 434
were exceptionally elaborate for the Khasi. They purchased vast rice fields [439
in the plain, which used to be cultivated by Bengalees and Garo labourers
engaged by them. These Khasi do not themselves know how to cultivate 342
rice fields; they have always been managers or landowners. Their boys used 166
to be sent to high schools and colleges in Sylhet. As a result of their trading 464
with the Bengalees, many of them read and speak fluent Bengalee. There is 874
no difference between their style of clothing and that of the Bengalees, though
the women maintain their traditional dress in the Shella style. 191

They have thus been distinguished from the rest of the Khasi not only 291]
geographically, but also economically and culturally. Their personality also
differs sharply from the rest of the Khasi. They are very sociable, and quick, 157
a quality lacking among the Khasi of [illegible] and [illegible]. They are 184
clever enough to deal with strangers. The upland Khasi say Shella people
are very cunning. This remark shows one side of these people. They had to 648
be cunning, since they traded with the Sylhet Bengalees who were said to be the 177
most cunning of their race. Their role in the trade and in the history of the
modernization of the Hills was considerable. For centuries they represented 178
intellectual Khasi owing to their contact with Hindu civilization, while the
Hills remained in darkness. They assumed an important role when the British [619]
established an administration in the Hills, and even up to now, many leading
Khasi originated from this area; for instance, Lab Hat, the first interpreter
of the British Headquarters at Cherrapunjee; Jeebon Roy, who was the first
Magistrate among the Khasi; [illegible] Sing, a lawyer and Member of the Legis-
lative Assembly (the grandson of Jeebon Roy); Nichols Roy, Minister of Health
and Prisons of the Assam Government, Member of the Legislative Assembly,
and Missionary of the Church of God; R. R. Thomas (brother of Nichols Roy),
Principal of the Gauhati University, etc.

Through constant cultural contact with Hindu, and encouraged by their 177
economic prosperity, the Shella Khasi, like the Jaintias, have been much 648
influenced by Hindu culture. However, this does not mean that the people
of Shella adopted the Hindu beliefs. Though there is a small Hindu shrine, 771
and some ceremonial elements were borrowed from the Hindu, most of the
795

pendable water supply. Villages are about two to 361
five miles apart, and have no boundary markers. In
the past, villages contained semipublic buildings and [344]
grounds: the home of the village priest (also the
home of a chief if he resided in that village), the vil- [443]
lage marketplace, and tree groves, cremation grounds,
or other awesome spots that were believed to be [778]
inhabited by supernatural beings. Villages today may [346]
have also one or more Christian churches, govern-
ment social welfare buildings, and schools. Formerly,
villages were entered through a guarded gateway; [178]
this is no longer the case, and paths lead into vil-
lages from all directions. Often several villages are
nucleated into one large unit, named and also de-
scribed as a "village." These were once defense units, [712]
but were so uncohesive otherwise that institution-
alized rivalry obtained among the component vil- [628]
lages. Now, they have been integrated through the [178]
agency of all-village public services, especially [182]
schools. **Housing.** The traditional Khasi house is en- 342
tered through a door at the rounded end of a U-
shaped ground plan, and is about 20 feet at widest
extent; it is about 30 feet deep, and is elliptical or
hogback in profile. Its walls are of stone blocks ce-
mented with mud. The roof of grass thatch, sup-
ported by a bamboo frame, overhangs the walls on
their outside, down to about three feet above the
ground. The house is divided into two parts: the
front one-third is on the ground level, floored either
with stone blocks or tamped earth, and is used for
storage of occupational instruments and as a shelter
for poultry. The rear two-thirds is raised four feet on
piles of stone blocks to a platform of planks, and
is partitioned into six rooms, comprising a kitchen,
areas for storage of food and water, and sleeping
quarters. Furniture is minimal, and the house is to- 352
tally undecorated. There are no windows, and no 353
smoke vents. A house generally has a companion 354
shed, walled of wood and grass matting and thatched 343
with grass. This serves as a pigsty, but it may be
partitioned also to house cows, and it may have a loft
for fuel storage. Compounds often contain garden 361
plots, and are fenced around with stone or bamboo
and mud. Nowadays, the traditional house has given 177
way to Western-style bungalows of wood and tin, 184
especially in and around Shillong. [Cf. Mukherjee et 342
al. 1943.]

ECONOMY. The Khasi economy is a market economy 241
based on agriculture, and most Khasis are primary 433
producers, sellers, middlemen, and/or providers of 443
services in connection with markets. Khasis are often
multioccupational: they produce goods for partial sub- [463]
sistence, and also play some part in trade. **Agricul-**
ture. On the Shillong plateau, the major field crops 241
are potatoes, maize, millets, and dry rice, still pro-
duced mostly through swidden farming, with a two- to
three-year period of fallow, but increasingly through
continuous use of a single field with the aid of ma-

household deities, and ancestor and sacrifice deities. 776
Deities of the first two categories are simply aspects 771
of the high God or Goddess. ◆ The earth is peo-
pled with two great orders of land demons and
water demons who cause all undesirable, unnatural,
and otherwise inexplicable events, acting either on
their own or as instruments in the hands of sorcerers.
Apart from omens, both in nature and in dreams, 787
Khasi attach supernatural significance also to certain 816
numbers, and to the colors white, black, and red.
They hold especially important folk beliefs regarding 829
betel nut, paddy rice, gold and silver, and clothing.
Practitioners. The two classes of religious practition- 791
ers are the village or state priests and the sacrificers.
Both are male. They use the same divinatory tech- 787
niques of reading broken eggshells and the entrails 788
of cocks, and they both sacrifice cocks, hens, goats,
pigs, and cattle. Their skills are not taught to them
so much as picked up by observation and confirmed
by demonstrations of efficacy. A priest is elected
from among the men of his clan to direct his skills to
the public good until he dies, and his rewards are
institutionalized and come from the village or the
state. A sacrificer acts for private persons or kin
groups, on call, and is rewarded by them personally
with gifts in cash or in kind. The sacrificer is called
upon to explain and then to ritually remedy every
variety of misfortune, especially illness, though his
powers are nowadays regarded with ambivalence,
and he is widely expected to become a sorcerer
sooner or later. ◆ There are two major types of sor- 754
cerer. One is the ritual specialist or sacrificer who
secretly turns his skills from good to evil, manipulat-
ing demons to injure a person or his group, and
acting always for himself alone out of considerations
of jealousy or revenge. The other is normally a lead-
ing citizen, a woman who is so wealthy and success-
ful that it is believed that she must keep a thlen, i.e.
a creature which will bring her prosperity as long as
she feeds it periodically with human blood. To pro-
vide this blood, the men of her household, or other
males whom she bewitches with a special whistle,
will indiscriminately murder anyone except a mem-
ber of her matrilineage. The Jaintias have an ana- [158]
logue to the thlen in their taro, except that the
ultimate result is death from illness rather than
murder. Minor witchcraft can be perpetrated by
poison keepers or persons with an evil eye, who are
often women. **Ceremonies.** The important traditional [illegible]
ceremonies were the life-crisis rituals relating to [illegible]
pregnancy and childbirth, the naming of a child, and [illegible]
death. Lesser ceremonies related to marriage and [illegible]
divorce, and to housebuilding. All these rituals were [illegible]
addressed primarily to the ancestors, and they are [illegible]
still performed in modified form by many Khasis. [illegible]
Other rituals, which were performed by groups such [illegible]
as villages, clans, local descent groups, or households, [illegible]
were addressed to the unnamed aspects of the high 781

The table above clearly shows that the medical facilities, especially in these villages are far from satisfactory. Only 8 villages out of [illegible] villages have a dispensary within or near the village or within a radius of five miles. Considering the lack of communication facilities and the hilly nature of the district even five miles is often too long a distance for a patient to go to the doctor or for a doctor to attend a patient. When the doctor has to cover long distances the charges become too high. As a result the poorer sections in times of serious illness have to approach unqualified medical men which also is profitable or otherwise to depend upon the mercy of God. Even for quinine and other cheap medicines one has to go to a dispensary or a private medical practitioner miles away. Apparently, the most disheartening fact is that the medical help received by the people from Government dispensaries are not often timely and adequate due to non-availability of a doctor and to inadequacy of stock of medicines.

6.8 **Sanitation**.—Though conditions of housing, sanitation, etc., of the villages are described in village notes in the appendix, it will be pertinent to make some general observations on the point. Unlike other hill tribes, the Khasis select their house sites on the hill slopes and level lands by the side of the hills as a protection from winds. From the fact that the villages are situated in the slopes one might be tempted to think that the sanitary and drainage system of the villages should be quite satisfactory. But in fact it is otherwise in many cases particularly in the case of big villages where too many families huddle up constructing their houses very close to each other thus practically converting the village into a slum. Many of the villages, due to their very location in groves surrounded by thick jungles do not get sufficient sunlight and as a result always remain damp, facilitating frequent incidence of cold and influenza. People remove the soil of excreta to jungles and bushes in and around the villages. Many of the villages are built on lower lands full of marshes, mud and cell pools, places which provide good breeding places for mosquitoes. Cowsheds and pig-sties are built close to the residential quarters which make the villages all the more dirty. Indeed, there are villages enjoying excellent sanitation and health but in majority of the villages there remains a lot to be done for improving the sanitary, drainage system, for educating the people to make their villages more hygienic. From the Government side also, elaborate measures should be adopted to combat and eradicate malaria which is still causing havoc in the district. Similarly, drinking water supply schemes should receive a high priority in a programme of development.

6.9 **Housing**.—Majority of the houses in the interior areas are made of thatch and bamboo with wooden planking or stone or [illegible] floor. Walls are plastered with mud. In higher altitudes houses are fairly compact presumably as a protection against wind and heavy rain. Some of these houses assume the shape of a half-barrel cylinder. They generally have only one opening through the main door, though some of them have windows in their side wall. They generally contain only one small room. One who is not used to such conditions wonders how the inmates, especially when there are five or six of them, could feel comfortable. Houses of the well-to-do people particularly those on the road side, are built in the modern style with C.I. roofing, stone floor, and plastered, whitewashed is [illegible] to [illegible] with plenty of [illegible] and [illegible]. [illegible] of [illegible] villages [illegible] agricultural facilities, [illegible] conditions for want of proper repair and maintenance.

6.6 **Educational facilities**.—The following table shows the extent of educational facilities enjoyed by the villages under enquiry.

TABLE [illegible]

Nearest school within a radius of (in miles)	L. P.	M. E.	H. E.	Basic	[illegible] school
	No. of villages having the nearest school				
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
more than [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

The above table reveals that out of a total of [illegible] villages, [illegible] villages have got a Lower Primary school located within the village, [illegible] have got within a radius of [illegible] miles and [illegible] within a radius of [illegible] miles. [illegible] of the [illegible] villages [illegible] from the [illegible], only [illegible] villages have got a Lower Primary school within the village, and [illegible] villages within [illegible] miles of the village. In respect of secondary education, the position is far from being satisfactory as the above table will reveal.

The number of pupils on the roll of the [illegible] Lower Primary and Basic schools located in the [illegible] villages was [illegible]. Thus the average number of pupils per village was [illegible] while the average number of families per village was [illegible]. The poverty of the villagers is the main reason for this low enrolment. [illegible] would rather like their children to do domestic work or [illegible] than to allow them to indulge in the [illegible] of going to school.

6.7 **Communication facilities**.—[illegible] there are no railways, [illegible] within the [illegible]. [illegible] communication facilities available to the people of the [illegible] [illegible] throughout the year.

625 to the sisters of his wife, or to her nearest relatives if there are no sisters. The rank and titles of a deceased rajah descend to his brother; where no brother exists, then to the male children of his mother's sisters (maternal aunts); should the maternal aunts have no male children living at the time, then to the eldest male child of his sisters. Where no relatives are to be found, the property of the deceased goes to the ruler of the country; so if a man dies leaving no relatives other than wife and children, (*i.e.* no relatives on the mother's side), the property in this case also goes to the ruler, who, as the wife and children cannot preserve the ashes of the deceased, takes charge of them, and for so doing takes all the property also. With regard to the inhabitants of the Lower Hills or Bhoi, the custom as to succession is as follows:—Property belonging to a subject of Bhoi is divided into two classes:—(1) Property inherited from ancestors, which descends to the nearest of kin or to the relative of a deceased person who can perform his obsequies. (2) Property acquired during the lifetime of the holder, which is inherited by the children, whose duty it is to provide for the maintenance of their mother until she remarries or dies.'

426 MATERIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.—The Khasis and the
648 Syntengs are as a people prosperous. Common labourers, if adult males, can earn wages as high as one shilling per diem, and adult
342 females as high as eightpence. The dwellings of the well-to-do classes are generally constructed of masonry, with thatched roof and
552 plank floor, and divided into two or three rooms. The furniture consists of a bedstead (*charpai*), a seat or two (*mora*), some cooking
768 utensils, and a few boxes. The ordinary peasants and poorer
194 classes construct their huts of stone, mud, or plank walls, with a thatch or grass roof. These are fitted with wooden platforms or loose planks placed on the ground to serve as beds. The food
762 of the well-to-do classes consists of rice, fish when obtainable, fowl
426 or meat, curry, vegetables, oil, hog's lard, fermented and spirituous liquors. It may be estimated that the living expenses of an average-sized household of this class would be about Rs. 25 or £2, 10s. a month, reckoning the articles of consumption at bazar prices. An ordinary husbandman or labourer lives on rice, dry fish, occasionally a
276 little meat, oil, or hog's lard. *Pan* leaf, betel-nut, and lime are essential to the comfort of all the hill people, who are inveterate chewers of *pan*. They commence at an early age, and are rarely seen without a *pan* leaf in their mouths; the females are quite

Of the sub-divisions of these people, the Khasi proper (74)—1911: 120,933—live in the Khasi Hills, the kindred Synteng in the Jaintia Hills. The Lynn Gam who are classified by Gurdon as half Khasi and half Garo live in the western part of the Khasi Hills, the people who inhabit the low hill country in the north of the district, which is usually called "Bhoi," are named the Bhoi. Many of them are really Mikir. My observations of the Khasi are limited to the surrounding of Shillong from where I visited the village of Nongkrem which is about 13 kilometers away (75).

The place is located in a trough between low hills which are covered by large stone boulders. A small water course runs through the village. The huts are partly built along the slopes of the hills which surround the village. The houses (Plate X, 4) all stand on small plots of land which are separated from each other by low stone walls; a narrow passage leads to them from the front side. Sometimes this passage is completely missing, in which event one has to climb over the wall. The houses stand on foundations of layers of irregular stone boulders. The walls are made of wooden boards—sometimes of bamboo—and are covered on the outside by grass. Grass is also used for roofing. Each strand is tied individually to bamboo poles, as in Burma (not as in Bengal where it is squeezed together between bamboo poles). Especially typical is the form of the roof; it is high and steep in the middle and the roof ridge is curved. The roof slopes down

74. P.R.T. Gurdon, The Khasis (London, 1907), pp. 1 ff. about house construction pp. 30 ff.

75. Cf. C. Becker, Anthropos 4 (1909), pp. 892-902.

down /233/ toward the front in a broad curve, projects here quite a bit beyond the front of the house and covers the stone terrace before the entrance, which is supported by posts, where the occupants customarily sit during the daytime. Firewood is also piled up here at the sides. In the rear the roof ridge is very little--or not at all--curved; the general impression which the house makes through its roof form has been compared with a pig which stands with bowed head before the fodder trough. Generally speaking, the Khasi houses are not very large. I did not see any houses longer than from 6 to 9 meters and with a width of from 3 to 5 meters. However, according to Gurdon (p. 30) there are sometimes houses with a length of more than 20 meters. The interior is completely dark. Sometimes a small window at the side--an innovation--or a second side entrance allows some light to filter in. From the roofed terrace one enters first an anteroom which contains at both sides provisions, potatoes, and also wood. A board wall which is closed on top by a wooden grate, where light and air can pass through, separates this anteroom from the main room; upon entering one has to walk up a few steps or climb over a high threshold.
[264] In the middle, toward the rear, is the fireplace. If the owner has a distilling license from the British authorities (76) the distilling vessels for the preparation of rice or millet brandy are always kept here. The people have a strong preference for alcohol and especially on bazaar days it is no rarity to see tipsy people. I observed this particularly at the bazaar in Mong-

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76. The restriction through license to counteract a little the consumption of alcohol, exists only in the area of Shillong. Otherwise the brandy production by the Khasi is not regulated.

[illegible] area. Before I could enter a hut the occupants had to remove a man who was dead drunk. Over
352 the fireplace hangs a rack on which wood is piled up for drying; also food provisions, rice, etc. are kept dry here during the rainy season. Behind it a rack made of sturdy beams runs straight through the center and sometimes extends along the sides. On it all kinds of household items are kept. In the better houses the best dishes of shiny, polished brass and china are displayed here. This rack also serves as a partition behind which, on the sides and at the rear wall of the house, are the sleeping accommodations.

[illegible] Considering the very unprepossessing physical appearance of the people, it is surprising how orderly and clean the houses are kept inside.
342 In the principal towns the well-to-do have already adopted the brick building and European comfort. With the Lyngngam and the Bhoi, however, we still find the pile dwelling (77). The houses have a length from 10 to 12 meters with a veranda which among the Lyngngam is in front, among the Bhoi in the rear of the house. These people
[36.] still practise migratory agriculture and therefore move their flimsily constructed houses every two or three years when they change to new fields. It follows that the Khasi house, as described above, represents an advanced construction method. That in earlier days bamboo construction was

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77. Gurdon, ibid., p. 32. There it is mentioned (above) that in some villages of the subdivision of the War pile dwellings are built because the main part of the house rests on firm ground on the mountain side and then extends on piles over the slope. (Cf. the Garo.) The same people still use the bachelor house.

[Burmese Art [illegible] Khasi Ar]

K 342 generally used follows from a once ruling law which forbade the Khasi the use of nails for house construction as being "sang," i.e. taboo (78). It remains a question whether the Khasi

78. Gurdon, pp. 30 ff. Cf. above, p. 206, fn. 1.

K [77] house with its curved roof form reflects the building style of the Bengali, who also in other respects influenced the customs of the Khasi (79),

79. To be sure the roof ridge of the Bengal hut is evenly curved toward both sides and the entrance is from the broad side. This roof style is a distinctive architectural theme with temples and tombs of Bengal, as Monmohan Chakravarti in "Bengali Temples and Their General Characteristics" Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal 5 (Calcutta, 1909), p. 180 explains in detail. But whether the relation with the Pallava architecture of South India exists, as conjectured here on p. 147, seems to me very doubtful.

or whether the roof, sloping down in front and projecting broadly over the entrance wall must be considered as a modification of the veranda awning of the pile dwellings.

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§ 342 From the numerous types presented above is it somehow possible to prove a homogeneous development? /236/ Without vague hypotheses, in view of the inadequacy of the historical sources of the Indo-chinese ethnographical groups, a line of direction

31: Scherman--79 E-4 (no date) 1915 AF1 Burma
Palaung AF10
Kachin AF6
Shan AF1
Garo [illegible]
Abor/[illegible]
Khasi [illegible]

Plate VIII (cont.)

3.

P
3-12 Palaung house in Panutaung, southern Shan State of Hsamonghkam. (Burmese: Thamakan).

4.

Interior of the Palaung house Figure VIII, 3.

Plate IX

1.

K
3-1
351 Kachin house in Pita, Bhamo District.

2.

Dancing place with spirit altars before the Kachin chief's house in Nong-bum, northern Shan State of North Hsenwi.

3.

K
3-1
353 Kachin chief's house with wind bell; not far from Namhkai, northern Shan State of North Hsenwi.
S
3-12

4.

House of the Phakial-Shan on the Dihing, near Margherita, Assam.

Plate X

1.

G
A
3-40 Abor houses (from A. Hamilton, _In Abor Jungles_, London, 1912).

2.

Garo house near Gauhati (Assam).

3.

G
[illegible]
[illegible]
3-40 Garo house, rear view of Figure X, 2.

4.

Khasi house in Nongkrem near Shillong (Assam).

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] AFI [illegible]
[illegible] AR 5
[illegible] AR 6
[illegible] AR 7

G
342

K
342

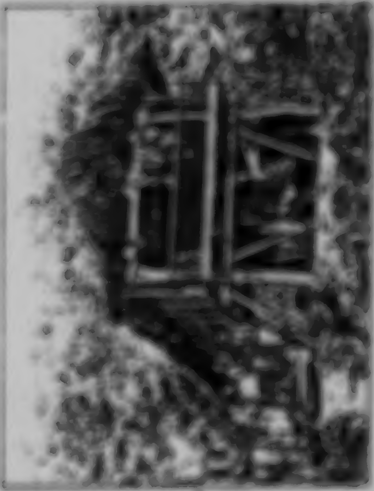
2

4

A
342

G
342
331

1



3

Plate X

[For description see page 79, category [illegible]-Analyzed]